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Box 1
File: Pol Zaire (K) 3.
Official-Internal (1st half)
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March 6, 1974

Dear Sheldon:

At Deputy Secretary Rush's direction, AF has consulted with EUR about the possible impact of a sale of M-16s to Zaire on the current Azores lease negotiations, in which the U.S. hopes to be able to resist certain Portuguese arms requests. In our discussions with EUR, we have raised the points made in paragraph one of Kinshasa 1948. Despite these considerations, EUR has concluded that a sale to Zaire now could seriously complicate the negotiations. Once talks have reached the stage where we are able to offer the Portuguese an assistance package which satisfies them, M-16s for Zaire will no longer pose a problem for EUR. Although it is impossible to predict now when that will be, I believe the importance and delicacy of the Azores negotiations are sufficient to warrant postponement of a decision on M-16s for Zaire until that time. I recognize that there is a strong possibility that the result of this may be to turn Mobutu to the Chinese for AK-47s, in which case we will have to find other ways to maintain our access to the ANZ.

With warm regards,

Sincerely yours,

Donald B. Fasum
Assistant Secretary

The Honorable
Sheldon B. Vance,
American Ambassador,
Kinshasa

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